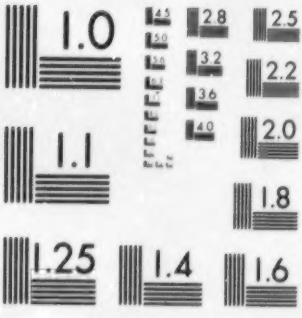

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ABSTRACT

The first step women in student personnel administration should take to increase their numbers in higher level positions is to identify themselves as promising and qualified employees. Their employers, too, have an obligation to identify promotable female employees and to support them in their efforts to leave entry level positions. Once identified, the women need formal advisement in the establishment of objectives, performance review, and counseling to prepare them for positions of higher salary and responsibility. Finally, formal advisement combined with developmental experiences could help women administrators to obtain promotion and thus avoid lowering their career goals or leaving the student personnel field altogether. (Author/LD)

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WHAT WOMEN MUST DO TO GET PROMOTED IN STUDENT PERSONNEL

Judith Cochran

Women in student personnel seem to remain in entry level positions. In Meyer's and Sandeen's (1972) survey of minority and women in student personnel, 67 per cent of all women administrators were in entry level positions while seven per cent were chief personnel administrators. Further, the Dean of Women position, traditionally a position of status and responsibility for women in student personnel, has been eliminated at many institutions resulting in reduced visibility of women in top student personnel positions (Catton, 1956; Cochran, 1978). With few women in top administrative positions, the conclusion must be that while women are hired, they are not promoted. Thus, women administrators either lower career goals or leave the student personnel field with neither the field nor the women themselves benefiting.

Background

Women are paid twenty per cent less than men with the same titles in the same institutions. For example, the Dean of Women receives an average of one thousand dollars less in annual salary than the Dean of Men (Chronicle of Higher Education, 1977). In his study of administrators, Astin (1977) found seven of the eight lowest paid administrative positions on campus are held by women. These included Registrar and Director of Housing, but even as Director of Housing or Registrar, there is still from a thousand to six thousand dollars discrepancy between male and female salaries (Chronicle of Higher Education, 1977).

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Paying minimum salaries and restricting promotion insures turn over and instability within the office. Budgetary constraings often necessitate that chief student personnel administrators maintain a large cadre of lower level positions. However, the selection of those who remain in lower positions on the basis of sex may not be defensible in terms of policy or management decisions. Most chief student personnel officers are now bound by affirmative action guidelines which dictate policies on hiring making it harder to pay women less. Even so, once hired, there is no agency outside the institution that establishes equitable promotion policies within the institution.

Implementing Change

The procedure for dealing with dissatisfaction has been to go to agencies outside the student personnel field. Grievance committees, federal aganecies or the courts have been most often viewed as the agents for change. These same changes can be actively considered and acted upon by top student personnel administrators. It is known that the power of the person who introduces the change is crucial. Havelock (1970) believes that change demanded by people with low status is accepted only when promoted by persons with greater influence in the power system. For example, insuring that women receive support from co-workers in order to do their jobs effectively is not simply a matter of promotion and salary increase, but it is also a matter of how the change is introduced and the manner in which it is presented. Thus, a federal mandate to equitably promote competent female administrators

may not insure that women are able to function successfully in the system. General agreement seems to be that those involved should have a participatory role in the implementation of changes within an educational system (Miles, 1967).

Specific Strategies

The first step for women administrators to take in increasing the number of women in higher level positions is to identify themselves as promising and qualified employees. There is also a need for employers to identify promotable employees as indicated from Traxel's study of female faculty members. In a study of teachers in Minnesota, 27 per cent of whom were women, Traxel found that women were much more influenced by others in their career goals than were the men. She noted that academic careers appeared to be something almost thrust upon these women, something to which they themselves would have not aspired. In a survey of 205 women administrators, Cochran (1979) found only 36 per cent planned to see any job other than the one they presently held. Similarly, Stevenson (1973) found one of the greatest needs of female administrators to be long range planning. Women who obtain a job in student affairs may be considering the employment itself as an end and may not seek advancement. If a woman sees no role models in higher level administrative positions, she may not consider advancement beyond the entry level or lower level position she currently holds. Thus, promising women more than promising men may need to be identified, by either the women themselves or the top student personnel administrators.

Once identified, the women need formal advisement in the establishment of objectives, performance review and counseling to prepare them for positions of higher responsibility and compensation. Results from several studies point to the need for specific training to help women cope with the lack of role models and the lowered self esteem fostered by the unequal salary structures (Loring and Wells, 1972; Johnson, 1975, Pfiffner, 1975). For example, experience with women's organizations, Panhellenic or programming activities for women may not be considered valuable training experience leading to promotion. Such information is usually not obtained in the formal advisement system. The Women's Educational Equity Act Program, Educational Personnel Development and National Institute of Education have recognized women administrators' needs for formal advisement by funding and designing programs to provide necessary training of female administrators. Instruction in these areas has been reviewed as necessary for women as they are often excluded from the informal advisement systems that operate effectively for men through all male gatherings and the mentor system (Henning and Jardin, 1977).

Formal advisement combined with developmental experiences could aid women administrators in obtaining promotion. In order to assess current management policies, the chief student affairs administrator should determine whether goals and subgoals of assignments are established. Once goals and subgoals are defined, check points for feedback and final deadlines are beneficial management practices. The employee needs to be informed how success will be rewarded and methods for reward. The role of the chief administrator would be to provide resources in budget, staff, and background information. Advisement of the staff would then put the job into context showing how it meshes

with departmental objectives and helps achieve organizational goals. Expecially for women, the assignment should be discussed in terms of the female administrator's short and long term goals. And finally, the chief officer should offer support by informing others about the new assignment and authority of the female administrator. While these managerial practices could function equally well for men and women, men often obtain guidance through the mentor system of informal advisement. Providing experience and formal advisement which aids the women in working well within the organizational structure increases the administrator's effectiveness and thus improves the potential of the student affairs office. If these steps are not taken by her employer, the female administrator should establish short and long term goals and then seek further advisement from her superiors. As the objective of most employers is increased effectiveness, the female administrator's efforts should be viewed positively.

Despite academic credentials, not all women hired instudent personnel positions should or could be promoted. However, it seems equally unlikely that all should remain in entry level positions, as research indicates. Those who prepare for student personnel administration and then remain in entry positions can not all be females of limited ambition. Rather, it seems the women are responding to organizational structure and policy as it operates to limit their potential.

The person most likely to successfully implement policy change is the chief student personnel officer. One of his goals should be to utilize effectively the resources he has. To hire women and then neglect in salary, advisement and promotion does not develop motivation or increase productivity.

Dissatisfaction of the females hired will create internal pressure in the office which every chief administrator would like to avoid. The conclusion is that component and ambitious female administrators will eventually be forced to leave student personnel.

Women administrators can and should take an active role in identifying themselves and weeking work experiences which prepare them for promotion. Thus, more attention should be given to the establishment and implementation of a program of development, including counseling, performance review, and establishment of objectives in order to qualify women for promotion to positions of higher responsibility and compensation. The result should be the achievement of maximum utilization and benefit from the resources women represent. Student personnel administrators are committed to the development of human potential which is not verified by restricting payment and promotion of almost one half of the members of one's own profession. By improving the status of female employers, chief administrators will increase the confidence of others in their ability to make policy decisions that demonstrate their commitment to the development of human potential.

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